

SOCIALIST STUDIES

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OBITUARY : CYRIL MAY

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE SOCIALIST PARTY
OF GREAT BRITAIN

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SOCIALISM NEEDS YOU:
AND YOU NEED SOCIALISM!

The Problem

Without members there can be no Socialist political organisation and no Socialism. The Socialist Party of Great Britain needs members in order to carry out Party work. We need writers, speakers and distributors of our journal, Socialist Studies and other Party literature. We need committed Socialists who reject capitalism and accept the urgent need for a new society based upon production for direct social use, not for profit. And we need members who accept and will be prepared to defend the SPGB's Object and Declaration of Principles.

The Solution

The solution is simple. If you agree with our analysis of capitalism, the Socialist objective and the political means required to establish common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society, then you are already a Socialist. But individual Socialists cannot alone make a marked impact upon Capitalism. The struggle for Socialism has to be an organised one and this requires collective action by the working class.

That is why a Socialist political party is vitally important. It focuses attention on the class struggle and enables workers to act with unity and strength. If you are a Socialist then the next step is to join the Socialist Party of Great Britain. We are not a sect or a cult. There are no intellectuals in the Party: only intelligent men and women who share the same class interests, Socialist ideas and Socialist objective. However, we only want members who agree with the Socialist case and if you do agree with us then we want you as a member.

What Next?

If you agree with the Socialist case then the next step is to apply for membership. We have no badges. No one will tell you what to do and to think. All we expect is political commitment and enthusiasm to work with other Socialists to achieve the establishment of Socialism. Joining the Socialist Party of Great Britain will be the single most important political decision you will make. One more Socialist is one less worker voting for capitalist parties like Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. A Socialist party with a growing membership will make an increasing impact on the political class struggle. If you want a world without unemployment, exploitation, war, poverty, discomfort and inequality you should seriously consider joining us. **ALL ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP to The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8HN, [www.spgb.org.uk/enquiries](http://spgb.org.uk/enquiries) or spgb.org.uk (e-mail).**

Erratum

In Socialist Studies no 49, in the article, *Did de Leon Influence the Socialist Party of Great Britain?*, the sentence (p. 16) in the third paragraph should have read: "Second, De Leon held to the Erfurt Programme line that religion is a private matter while the SPGB took the line that religion is a public, political issue."

A CENTURY OF PRINCIPLE

Socialists and especially Marxists have traditionally regarded particular dates as of special historic significance – for instance 1848, the '*year of revolutions*', the year in which the **Communist Manifesto** was first published. Later the Paris Commune of 1871 was regularly commemorated, while in the 20th century many celebrated the 1917 Russian Revolution each year. The foundation of the Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1904 is, we claim, of unique historic significance because it marks a giant stride forward in the self-organisation of the working class, with implications not only for the workers of Britain but also for the whole working class.

The tail end of the 19th century had seen a growth of working class political organisations, in Britain and in other countries. But those in Britain were influenced by trade union leaders who generally supported the Liberal Party. The Social Democratic Federation claimed to be a Marxist, Social Democratic party, similar to the German Social Democrat Party but it had little interest in '*foreign*' ideology and '*abstract*' theory. While its declared aim was "*The Establishment of a Free Condition of Society based on the Principles of Political Equality, with Equal Social Rights for All, and the Complete Emancipation of Labour*" its day-to-day policy was governed by its reformist demands – "*measures called for to palliate the evils of our existing society.. for immediate adoption*". Socialism, however vaguely and abstractly described, remained merely an abstract ideal while the actual policy of the SDF was to form opportunistic electoral alliances, particularly with the Liberals.

Those in the SDF who wanted to work for Socialism rather than for mere reforms of capitalism became increasingly frustrated. Around 1900 the SDF leaders – especially H M Hyndman, who controlled the SDF's official journals, together with his cronies on the Executive Committee - were moving towards amalgamation with the reformist Independent Labour Party, and even earlier were widening SDF membership so as to include all "*sympathisers who were against social injustice*" (Labour Annual, report of the SDF 1897, cited by R Barltrop, **The Monument**, 1975, p6).

To the SDF leadership, the hard-core Socialists, derided as "*impossibilists*", insisting on the importance of Marxist theory and the class struggle, forever opposing Quelch and others in the SDF when they canvassed support for Liberal party candidates – these people were seen simply as the awkward squad. So in 1904 the leadership engineered a Conference resolution giving themselves the power, for the next three years, to simply expel any members or branches which failed to support their opportunist line.

The 1904 leaflet we are reprinting was produced at this point, when many London members had been expelled and others could expect the same fate. The 1904 expulsions led directly to the establishment of a new party, The Socialist Party of Great Britain.

At the time, this party was unique: there had never been one like it before. Unlike all the other working class parties of the time, this was to be a Party with only one objective: working for Socialism and only for Socialism. The German Social Democrat Party, the French Parti Ouvrier, the SDF, the ILP, the Labour Representation Committee (later the Labour Party), the Socialist Labour Party (in Scotland and the USA) – all of these relied on a raft of reformist "*immediate demands*", a shopping list of '*palliatives*', to attract mass support. Such parties still do.

The SPGB to this day rejects such a reformist strategy since it can only confuse and side-track workers, distracting them from the central issue, Socialism. Only the SPGB regards Socialism not as a distant aspiration, an "*ultimate goal*", a Paradise to be achieved only after the Purgatory of umpteen reforms of capitalism, but as our only goal, our one and only "*immediate demand*".

The founders of the new Party set out their platform in the SPGB's **Object** and **Declaration of Principles** in which along with a clear statement of what is meant by Socialism, they gave a brief description of the capitalist class system, and the class struggle between the working class and the capitalist class. Whilst the first four of these **Principles** explain why Socialism is needed, the last four clauses deal with how this can be achieved. This was to be no Utopian Party.

willing the ends but unclear about the means. Throughout the **Declaration of Principles**, the influence of Marx's thinking is obvious.

Socialists organised themselves as a political party, entering "*the field of political action*" and recognising the class role of the state. "*Every class struggle is a political struggle*" (**Communist Manifesto**). For the first time in history, members of the working class had established, for themselves and their class, a political party organised for the sole purpose of working class emancipation. They declared emphatically that this emancipation "*must be the work of the working class itself*". In doing so they echoed the words of Engels:

To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific Socialism.

Socialism, Utopian and Scientific (tr. Aveling, 1892)

For the SPGB it was not enough to reject the leadership of Hyndman and Quelch, or other leaders of that time (Keir Hardie or Daniel De Leon, for instance). It was not enough to get rid of one set of leaders only to replace them with other leaders. For the founders of the Party, just as for us today, the important point is that in totally rejecting the supposed need for leadership, the Party would be one in which policy would always be decided by the entire Party membership. Within this Party, then as now, members are on an equal footing, operating on the Socialist principle of "*from each according to their ability*". The Party journal was to be owned and controlled by the membership, its editors answerable to their comrades. Whilst all other political parties went in for secret negotiations and opportunistic alliances with other parties, the SPGB declared that all its meetings would be open to all, to members and non-members alike. There were to be no factions, nothing hidden, no "*skeletons in the closet*".

To ensure that the Party would remain united, uncompromising, totally committed to the class struggle, its sole object to be Socialism and nothing but Socialism, then as now it was required that adherence to the Party's **Object** and **Declaration of Principles** must be the key precondition of membership. Further, to ensure that the Party would not become enmeshed in opportunistic alliances with other parties, the seventh clause – the 'hostility' clause – was drafted, asserting that this Party must be "*hostile to every other political party*".

The same point was echoed in the final clause which begins:- "*The Socialist Party of Great Britain ... enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist...*"

Since only the SPGB, now as in 1904, takes this uncompromising stand, working for Socialism and nothing but Socialism, it follows that this Party has to be opposed to all other parties, especially the many that claim to be 'socialist' whilst working for capitalist reforms. You cannot travel north and south at the same time. You have to choose. The SPGB asserts that either you work to establish Socialism as soon as possible or you work to reform and improve capitalism. You cannot do both.

To re-read the documents published a century ago by the founders of this Party is to be reminded of what a huge step forward this was. Not for them the well-meaning patronage of a William Morris, with his concessions to anarchism one day and to Fabian reformism the next. Not for them the elitist vanguardism common on the continent and already a key tenet of Leninism. Not for them the opportunist reformism of the Second International parties who only ten years later abandoned the principle of class internationalism, in support of the 1914-1919 bloodbath.

In 1904, in establishing a Party to work for Socialism and only for Socialism, on the principal of the class struggle, a Party whose policy was to be determined by its class-conscious membership, the founder members of the SPGB laid down a sound foundation for generations of future Socialists to build on. This was to be a Party founded on clear, uncompromising, class-conscious principles.

Many decades later however, the Party became increasingly dominated and betrayed by an undemocratic faction whose activists wanted to water down the Party's **Principles**. They did not fancy the 'hostility' clause; they objected to the argument about political action; they disliked any mention of the class struggle; they wanted to forge alliances with reformist pressure groups.

Again, just as in 1904, there was an "awkward squad" to be got rid of - Socialists who insisted on the importance of Socialist theory, on an uncompromising adherence to the principle of the class struggle, and on the necessity for political action to achieve Socialism.

Again, as in 1904, they were expelled by the opportunists. In 1991, in reconstituting the **Socialist Party of Great Britain**, the issue was the same as it had been in 1904:

The aim of those who formed the Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1904 was to form a party of convinced socialists having as its only object the establishment of Socialism. In reconstituting the Socialist Party of Great Britain our aim is the same.

Socialist Studies No 3

No Alliances !

All political parties are but the expression of class interests, hence the working-class party cannot ally itself with or support any section of the capitalist party, for any alliance or bargain between them can only serve the interests of the ruling class by perpetuating the present system. The working class party must be opposed to all other parties.

Manifesto of the Socialist Party of Great Britain
London, June 12, 1905

A STATEMENT OF POLITICAL INTENT

We publish below, on the eve of the Socialist Party of Great Britain's centenary, a political statement of intent by some of the founding members of the Party

A MEETING
TO
FORMALLY CONSTITUTE THE NEW PARTY
WILL BE HELD ON
Sunday, June 12th, 1904
at
PRINTERS HALL,
BARTLETT'S PASSAGE,
FETTER LANE, E.C.
AT 6 P.M. PROMPT

Comrades who are prepared to co-operate in forming the Party will be welcomed

To the Members of the S.D.F

COMRADES.

In a recent circular we drew your attention to the position of the S.D.F. and the particular conditions surrounding some of its prominent members.

For years those who hold the views given in our previous manifesto have been working inside the Movement with a view to bringing the various facts before the members of the rank and file, and up to the issue of that circular were hoping that even yet it would be possible to remodel the S.D.F. and bring its policy into line with its principles.

Against this, however, was the fact that the Executive Council, largely influenced by H. Quelch, who, as we have shown in our previous circular, is dominated by the Trade Union leaders and others who have a financial grip upon the Twentieth Century Press, opposed in every way free and open discussion of our position. All criticisms of the policy or the actions of the Executive Council were turned into questions of personal abuse in order to hide the real issue.

The E.C. have now completely cast off the mask in this matter. Not only were the expulsions engineered at the Conference entirely without justification, evidence or notice - unless the endeavour of those expelled to lay the facts before their fellow-members is considered justification - but the E.C. have since expelled four other comrades for merely protesting against this action, and in their latest circular they again purposely obscure the issue, decline to discuss, and express their intention of expelling, without right of appeal, those members who dare to advocate the adoption of an uncompromising policy.

Breaches of Socialist discipline have been alleged against us. True! breaches of Socialist discipline have occurred, but these have been on the part of members of the Executive, officials of the Federation and supporters of the Opportunist policy against which we have protested. The support by H. Quelch and C. F. Davis of five Liberal-Labour candidates for the London County Council, viz. Ben Cooper, W. Steadman, H. Gosling, G. Dew and J. Gregory, when these men were nominated at a meeting of the London Trades Council, of which since then H. Quelch has been appointed Chairman; the support of capitalist candidates for Parliament, eg D. Naoroji (a large shareholder in the Twentieth Century Press), by J. F. Green, sanctioned by the Executive Council; Percy Alden by Will Thorne (a Parliamentary candidate of the S.D.F.) in spite of the determined opposition of the Tottenham Branch of the S.D.F.; the support of Will Crooks by the same S.D.F. representative; the canvass by J. Hunter Watts of various members of the S.D.F. on behalf of Masterman, Liberal candidate for Dulwich; the repeated declaration by Quelch that he should ask the sanction of the E.C. to support W. Steadman, the Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury; the support by the late E.C. of Tellett and Burgess; and by the present E.C. of J. Hill, Liberal-Labour candidate at Govan; the support by H. Quelch of J. J. Terrett, a thrice expelled member of the Federation, at North

West Ham, against the known desires of the two local branches: - these are a few recent instances of the breaches of discipline encouraged and condoned by the official S.D.F.

It is these men who now have the audacity to allege breach of discipline against those members whose only crime is that, **within the Federation**, they have exposed these and similar actions and sought to enforce Socialist discipline upon the leaders and officials of the body.

Now, Comrades, in building up a strong Socialist Party it is indispensable that the fullest discussion on all matters affecting the position of the Organisation should be allowed, and it is also obvious that the members of a Militant Revolutionary Party cannot consent in any way to have their opinions stifled by the actions of their E.C.

But it is now evident that all further education of the members, either in relation to the facts of the situation, or in the essential principles upon which the Federation is based, is impossible within that body. Realising this, the signatories to the aforementioned circular met together with others at Sidney Hall, Battersea, on Sunday, May 15, 1904, to consider the whole position, and carried with enthusiasm the following resolution:-

That this meeting has arrived at the conclusion that the only way to put the principles and policy embodied in the circular into operation is to leave the S.D.F in a body and send a manifesto round the branches explaining our position and calling upon all those who are in favour of the same to join us in forming a straight, uncompromising Socialist Party.

In pursuance of this resolution, we appeal to all comrades who believe that the economic forces working through the development of capitalist society demand the formation of a Revolutionary Socialist Party; who believe that the emancipation of the working-class can only be obtained by the combined action of the members of that class, consciously organised in a Socialist party, and who recognise that the Class-Struggle can alone be the basis of such a party;

that therefore Social Democrats must avow themselves in opposition to all non-Socialist parties and politicians; and who realise that the S.D.F. has ceased to merit the name of such a party, to throw in your lot with us and to help us in building up a strong and healthy fighting party, organised on definite class lines for the emancipation of the working class from the wage-slavery under which they exist - from the capitalist society of which they are the victims.

Comrades in London, we have with us most of the active workers in the S.D.F. - so much so that that organisation can no longer provide a lecture list owing to the lack of speakers and from the provinces we have a number of promises of support. Conscious of the rectitude of our principles and the soundness of our policy, we ask you to help us to carry them into action, to cease to belong to a body which is fast becoming compromised beyond redemption, and to refuse longer to place men or traditions above the soundness of your principles or your party.

Signed on behalf of the Battersea Meeting: -

A. S. ALBERY	H. J. HAWKINS
E.J. B. ALLEN	T. A. JACKSON
A. ANDERSON	C. LEHANE
R. ELDRICK	H. MARTIN
J. FITZGERALD	H. C. PHILLIPS, <i>Secretary (pro tem)</i>

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE

Sidney Hall, York Road, Battersea: dated May 28th 1904.

NOTE - The following Branches have already withdrawn: Battersea, Peckham, Dulwich, Watford, Wood Green, Kensal Town and Central West Ham. Also minorities from several other branches.

BRAIN-DEAD ECONOMICS

In his pamphlet, "The Official Science of Brain-Dead Economics", Derek O'Neill demonstrates that orthodox economics is "*a corrupt science*" (p4). He points out that economists have no understanding of inflation, that the price mechanism hides a social reality of poverty in which economists are totally uninterested, that the various theories of controlling the money supply are utterly false, that because economists work without a concept of class their discussion of savings is irrelevant, and that the foundation of economics, the theory of supply and demand, is "*transparent trickery*" (p17).

There is nothing particularly novel about the criticism of academic economics put forward in the pamphlet. Others have shown in greater detail and with more clarity the intellectual poverty of academic economics. As far back as the 19th century Marx had already pointed out in books such as **Capital** and **Theories of Surplus Value** that most of the economists after Smith and Ricardo were vulgar, shallow and apologetic.

Marx makes an appearance in O'Neill's pamphlet and, unlike most of today's economists, he at least seems to have read him. O'Neill claims that "*the Manifesto is as relevant today as ever it was. The workers of the world still need to lose their chains*" (p30). However he criticises Marx's system (revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat) as being "*theoretically false*" since he believes that it "*leads to tyranny in practice*" (p30).

Marx does not lead to tyranny

Mr O'Neill's dilemma is to simultaneously agree with the **Communist Manifesto** and disagree with the revolutionary outcome. It is a false dilemma. Marx stated in the **Manifesto** that the task of establishing Socialism has to be the work of the working class itself and no one else. When Marx used the phrase "*Dictatorship of the Proletariat*", it was meant to contrast with the prevailing dictatorship of Capital. There is no inconsistency between the Socialist propositions contained in the **Manifesto** and the practical reality of a

future Socialist society based on the free association of men and women engaged in production for social use and not profit.

Socialists would also point out that Marx's ideas have never been applied in practice. Socialism has never existed. Common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society has never been established. Nowhere has the wages system been abolished. O'Neill's error is to confuse the long years of State Capitalism in Eastern Europe where tyranny did prevail and where there was a dictatorship by the Party over the rest of society with the Socialist writings of Marx. State Capitalism has nothing to do with Marx.

Marx neither advocated State Capitalism nor the minority rule of a dedicated group of professional revolutionaries over the rest of society. Russian State capitalism and the capitalism currently found in China and Cuba had and have nothing to do with Marx and his ideas. To hold such a view would be as absurd as Japanese victims in 1945 blaming the physicist, Rutherford, for the destruction of Nagasaki. Marx could no more control people like Lenin erroneously calling themselves "*Marxist*" and their country "*Socialist*" than Lord Rutherford was responsible for the future use of his experiments in developing the atomic bomb.

Marx, Money and Gold

But O'Neill's central error is to believe there is a fundamental error in Marx's economic system. He claims to have discovered this error in a footnote in **Capital, Volume 1** on page 104 (Allen and Unwin) or page 225 (Penguin). In the section on "*Money, or the Circulation of Commodities*", Marx takes issue with Fullarton on an important matter of inconvertible money which O'Neill believes we can "settle without fear of contradiction".

Fullarton's view was that gold could be dispensed with as money, and inconvertible notes could take over "provided only the quantity of issues be kept under due consideration". Marx ridiculed this view, and higher on the

same page stated clearly that paper money was only a symbol for gold. Marx wrote.

Paper money is a token representing gold or money. The relation between it and the values of commodities is this, that the latter are ideally expressed in the same quantities of gold that are symbolically represented by the paper. Only in so far as paper money represents gold, which like all other commodities has value, is it a symbol of value.

O'Neill rightly points out that in the first half of the twentieth century the leading European countries replaced gold by their own standard currencies. He further states that since 1971, when President Nixon closed the so-called "gold window", the entire world has operated on national paper currencies. He concludes that gold has not been "money" for the last thirty years, and concludes that Fullarton was right and Marx was wrong.

The consequences are severe for Marx's theoretical analysis. According to him, value is determined by labour-time, and it is the labour-time that enables it to act as a basis of comparison for the labour-time of all other commodities ... Take that gold away, and the basis of comparison is lost ... How can paper notes provide a basis, when they have no link whatever to labour-time?

O'Neill then tries to rectify what he takes to be Marx's fundamental error by trying to by-pass the labour theory of value and to set up a system where commodities are compared with their production times.

However, there is no fundamental error in Marx's analysis of capital. There is no need to amend Marx. And there is no reason to reject the soundness and explanatory power of the Labour Theory of Value.

Marx's relevance today

O'Neill finds Marx "*enigmatic*" and he is in a long line of people who ask why we continue to make use of the writings of Karl Marx who died over one hundred years ago and whose theories have been so generally rejected by economists.

So many things have happened, they say, that Marx could not have known about; capitalism has undergone such unforeseen changes. Unaccountably the questioners forget to put it to themselves. If Marxian theories have long been disproved and discredited why do the opponents of Socialism go on, year after year, making new attempts to disprove them and discredit them? Why don't they just forget?

When we come to economic theory, Marx's analysis of capitalism in operation, value, prices, unemployment, banking, crises and so on is more valuable in depth and scope than anything done by his detractors.

But is Marx out of date? What are the present economic problems of the Labour government but another attempt to deal with the trade cycle which Marx described and explained - and in particular the fact to which Marx drew attention, that in certain phases of the boom prices rise and wages rise faster than production?

And one sphere in which Marxian theories hold their own is in the explanation of price changes, including the prices of individual commodities, the price of labour-power (wages), the general upward movement in booms and the downward movement in slumps, the general movements related to changes in the value of gold, and finally the general movements related to the volume of currency.

Leaving aside the day-to-day fluctuations of price caused by market fluctuations of supply and demand and the fact that some commodities normally exchange above or below their value, Marx postulated that the basic element in the exchange of all commodities in capitalist society is value,

measured by the amount of socially necessary labour in all the operations required in the production of a given commodity.

From which it follows, firstly, that if one commodity requires twice as much socially necessary labour as another, its value will be twice as great and, secondly, that in gold all other commodities find their "*universal equivalent*", again related to value. This explains what is behind the value of gold coinage: the coin is a weight of gold representing the value of gold. In concrete terms, the Pound or sovereign which circulated in Britain in the 19th and into the 20th century was, by law, a fixed weight (about one quarter of an ounce of gold).

The next proposition is that in order to carry on the sales and purchases of commodities and other payments a certain amount of gold coin (and subsidiary silver, copper, etc, coinage) would be needed. A number of factors enter into the determination of what volume of currency will actually be needed: the volume of transactions, the prices of commodities and the rapidity of the circulation etc. (For a description the reader is referred to Marx's *Capital Volume 1*, Chapter 3, "Money, or the Circulation of Commodities".)

The next stage in Marx's explanation is that a circulating gold coinage can, without any alteration of the proposition, be replaced by convertible paper currency that is freely convertible into a legally fixed and unchanging weight of gold. In 19th century Britain, Bank of England notes, which circulated alongside the gold coins, were by law convertible on demand into gold.

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN
CAMDEN / BLOOMSBURY BRANCH**

meets at 6 pm on the 4th Tuesday of month at
51 Argyle Street, London WC1 (5 mins. Kings Cross Tube Station).
All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome.

The Intellectual Poverty of Modern Economics

Then comes a completely different situation, the replacement of gold coin and convertible bank notes by an inconvertible paper currency - the situation in Britain today. The Marxian proposition, still based firmly on the concept of value, is that if the inconvertible paper currency exceeds in amount the amount of gold coinage that would be needed, the general price level will correspondingly rise.

If the quantity of paper money issued is, for example, double what it ought to be, then, in actual fact, the pound has become the money name of one-eighth of an ounce of gold instead of about one-quarter of an ounce. The effect is the same as if an alteration had taken place in the function of gold as a standard of price. The values previously expressed by the price of £1 will then be expressed by the price £2.

Capital Volume 1, page 144, Kerr edition

But what have other economists to say about this? Most of them reject the old theory outright. The late Lord Keynes wrote in his **Treatise on Money Reform** seventy-six years ago:

Thus the tendency of to-day - rightly I think - is to watch and control the creation of credit and to let the creation of currency follow suit, rather than, as formerly, to watch and control the creation of currency and to let the creation of credit follow suit.

In the meantime, in keeping with this changed attitude (and in keeping with mystical ideas on "credit creation"), the meaning given to the word "money" changed. Some writers wanted to regard as money, not only the note issue and coinage but also those bank deposits which are withdrawable on demand, and others have extended it to cover all bank deposits.

And the 1959 Committee on the Working of the Monetary System capped it by declaring that they regarded the note issue as in effect no more than "*the small change of the monetary system*" (page 118).

But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The economists who reject Marx have to explain why events - that the price level up until the 1980's was more than three times what it was before the Second World War - are explicable on the lines

of Marx's proposition about the effects of an excess issue of currency, but quite inexplicable on their theory that the amount of currency can be disregarded. As for Mr O'Neill, who at least appreciates that inflation is caused by the introduction of extra currency over and above that already circulating, in denying that the value of gold acts as the "*universal equivalent*", he is like a man who sees a balloon inflating but cannot give an account of why.

Socialist Action in Parliament

The Socialist Party of Great Britain has as its object the establishment of Socialism. It is a revolutionary party based on the class struggle, and not a reform party. Holding that no amelioration of the workers' condition can be obtained under capitalism that would be worth the amount of time and energy spent in working and organising to obtain it, the Socialist Party is opposed to the waste of such time and energy, and to the confusion involved in attempting to improve capitalism by means of reforms, thus obscuring the class struggle. A party claiming to be socialist, but with a list of reforms or "*immediate demands*", attracts reformers who are not socialists, and has a reformist and not a socialist electorate behind it. Even if such a party obtains political control it is useless for the purpose of furthering Socialism.

The Socialist Standard, September, 1932 p. 9, editorial "*Socialist Action in Parliament, Etc*"

WHO ARE THE EXTREMISTS?

At the fictional '*centre*' of capitalist politics there are a majority of politicians, academics and journalists who defend a particular shared view of the world. They hold that every problem found in capitalism has a solution within the context of a reform. Their political use of the word extremism is used to stifle debate about proposing alternatives. They lump all minorities together and tar them with the same brush. Core beliefs go unchallenged. Uncomfortable historical facts are marginalised or ignored: for example, the fact that a Socialist party was formed in 1904 without leaders, that a Socialist Party did oppose the First World War on grounds of class, and that a Socialist Party, using arguments from Marx, showed in 1918, theoretically and practically, that Socialism in Russia was impossible - these are all conveniently ignored. To grapple with these facts upsets their comfortable view of the world.

The problem of being a minority

We are the first to admit that Socialists are currently in a minority. We wish it were not the case. However we can only persuade workers to become Socialists, we cannot force them to become Socialists or lead them to Socialism. Yet we believe we have a case against capitalism that should be listened to. We play by the rules of reason and evidence. We have always stressed that the best propaganda is the truth. We do not go in for character assassination, name-calling and labelling, sweeping generalisations, inadequate proof or assertions, doomsday thinking, and tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty. We do not resort to quasi-legal and illegal methods to achieve our Socialist objective but work politically within the parliamentary system to abolish capitalism once a democratic Socialist majority exists.

'Extremist' is a label found in political discourse. Any one who departs from a Western Liberal view of the world which states that the political order we have in Europe and the US is the best of all possible worlds is considered extreme. Labour celebrate their '*centre-Left*' political ground. Critics of

their policies are written off as "*the dark forces of conservatism*". Labour politicians clothe themselves in a language of the fictional centre with words such as "progressive", "new", and "radical", but they prosecute war and violence, vie with the Right for the anti-asylum vote, and propagate moral conservatism and market fundamentalism.

Elsewhere, groups like the Socialist Workers Party and the British Nationalist Party are both regarded as extreme. They are referred to respectively as "*The Hard Left*" and the "*Extreme Right*". They offer their supporters street violence, the breaking-up of meetings held by opponents and any they do not agree with and, if politically successful, would use tactics of terror against dissent and replicate the form of politics once found in Lenin's Russia and Hitler's Germany. Yet, like the Labour Party and the Conservative Party they can only offer capitalism, they can only offer the wages system and class exploitation. Against the interest of the working class their repulsive ideas are extreme but they share quite a lot of common characteristics with all the other political parties of capitalism.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain does not fit into the categories used to describe political extremism and the anodyne politics of the middle ground which celebrates '*consensus*' and '*compromise*' from positions of political power. The SWP write us off as '*Ultra-Leftists*', a term of abuse they picked up from Lenin. Are we to the Left of the SWP? We disagree. The SWP are not Socialist, nor do they have a Socialist political programme or a Socialist Objective. They have leaders and the led. They work for a State Capitalist Utopia in which the wages system will still be retained. Their politics is as anti-working class as it is repugnant. The SWP have more in common with the BNP than with the politics of the SPGB. Hitler learnt his politics from a close study of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. The political position of the SPGB is unique in that it articulates the interest of the working class.

In fact, there is no political spectrum from centre to extreme. What does exist is a capitalist politics made up of different capital interests and an opposing Socialist politics. In short, a political class struggle between the capitalist class

and the working class. And the organisational structure, policy and objectives of the SPGB are unique and utterly opposed to the politics found in capitalist organisations. We are democratic, we have no leaders imposing their political will on the membership, and we do not advocate violence as a means to achieve our political objective. In fact, we want to democratically create a Socialist majority before Socialism is established.

Who are the extremists?

Socialists want to see the abolition of capitalism and its replacement with Socialism. We want to see social relationships and social activity take place within the framework of common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. We want to see the end of the wages system and class exploitation. We want a classless society of free men and women in which there will be no employers, and no commodity production and exchange for profit.

Our opponents tell us that this is an extreme position. They are uncomfortable with our political language. They do not like words like '*class struggle*', '*revolution*' and '*Socialism*'. They refer to Socialists as dogmatists and throw religious insults at us like sectarianism and millenarianism. They label us as "*idealists*", "*Utopians*" and "*dreamers*". However, insult is no substitute for argument and ridicule is no alternative for the facts. And Socialists have sound and valid arguments for capitalism to be replaced by Socialism. We also have demonstrable facts that show that capitalism everywhere fails to meet the needs of the working class.

And we argue that the Socialist proposition is not extreme but a wholly reasonable proposition. In fact, it is those who want to retain capitalism who are extreme. To want to retain a system that exploits the majority of the human populations is an insult to our intelligence. And to want to consign the vast

majority of society to a life of alienation, boredom, unpredictability and cultural poverty is irrational.

Socialism is not an extreme measure. Socialism reflects the political interest of the working class. Socialism resolves social problems incapable of being resolved by the social reformers. If the social reformers were right, and they have been given two centuries to prove their case, there would be now no war, unemployment, poverty and social alienation. But there are. The problems are still there. Already Blair is backtracking on his boast that his government would eradicate child poverty by 2015. By the government's own definition of child poverty the gap has widened (**Independent**, 14 March, 2003). Is it not dogmatic, doctrinaire and unreasonable to pursue failed reforms and not inquire about alternatives to the profit system and class exploitation? Is there something of an extremist that tells the working class that there is no alternative to Capitalism?

Socialists want production and distribution to take place simply to meet human need. What is more practical than this? We want a society in which social need is the governing factor, not profit and class privilege. We want to see democracy at the heart of what is produced and distributed. We want to see all of society decide how production takes place, under what conditions, to what quality and for whom. We want to see people having direct access to the goods and services they need to thrive as human beings. All very reasonable.

So what is politically extreme? Extremism is to accept the current social framework that creates unnecessary poverty and death around the world because it is not profitable to feed, clothe, educate and provide health services for millions of human beings. Extremism is to support a class system of privilege which sees production take place just to enrich a small minority of the population. And extremism is the political dogma that states that there is no alternative to war, unemployment and poverty - that capitalism is the best of all possible worlds.

STATE TERRORISM - U.S. STYLE

Socialists had no time for Saddam Hussein and his repressive regime. He presided over a State terrorism that imprisoned, tortured and killed. People were routinely arrested on trumped-up charges and "confessions" extracted before they were murdered by the State. In the 1930's the capitalist Left in Britain also admired Stalin much in the same way as they admired Hussein because he was an enemy of the US. During the Second World War the US and British governments admired Stalin too. It was only The Socialist Party of Great Britain who opposed Stalin and his political representatives in Britain. As a consequence our meetings were broken up and we were denounced as "social fascists".

We also argued that Stalin followed Lenin as night followed day. Socialists do not take sides in disputes between nation states. They are no worse or better than each other. All nation states are political sites of class exploitation and class plunder. They are held together by State violence and State force.

So it comes as no surprise to learn that a House Committee in Illinois voted in March of this year to abolish the death penalty after testimonies about police torture from men who had faced execution. Similarly, in Texas it was discovered that creative science in the laboratories had sent innocent men and women to a judicial death (*Independent*, 7 March 2003 and 8 August 2003).

Just to be consistent in the US state's brutality and violence, military officials admitted that two prisoners captured in Afghanistan in December had been killed under interrogation at Bagram air base, north of Kabul - confirming a belief that the US is resorting to torture in its treatment of Taliban fighters and suspected al-Qa'ida operatives.

Torture is part of a long list of concerns about the Bush administration after the extra-judicial murder of al Qa`ida suspects by an unmanned drone in Yemen and the indefinite detention of "enemy combatants" at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, a number of whom have committed suicide (**Independent**, 7 March 2003).

Here, according to Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (**Independent**, 8 March 2003) is how the US tortures prisoners:-

- Sleep deprivation
- Denial of medication for battle injuries
- Forcing prisoners to stand or kneel for hours on end with hoods on
- Subjecting them to loud noises and sudden flashes of light
- Engaging in culturally humiliating practices such as having them kicked by female officers

The US government it appears even tortures by proxy. Amnesty International have shown that the US hands suspects over to countries such as Jordan, Egypt or Morocco, where torture techniques are an established part of the security apparatus.

Liberals throw their hands up in horror. They want a benign, conflict-free capitalism. There is as much chance of this as there is of finding a fairy at the bottom of the garden. What do you expect? All capitalist States resort to terrorism, torture and acts of violence when it suits their interests. International rivalry is not a game of cricket. It is an arena of conflict and war and death and destruction. As the musician, Frank Zappa, once remarked, under capitalism "*the torture never stops*".

HEAVENLY NONSENSE

When in late June 2003 an old-time film star died aged 96, one of her contemporaries remarked that she would now be reunited with her late lover who had died some years before.

The absurd assumption lying behind such beliefs is that the '*soul*' which is supposed to survive the physical body has all the same attributes as the living person.

To be '*reunited*' implies the ability to carry on a relationship, which means recognition, communication, sexuality and so on. So the eyes, ears and body continue to function, which means the brain, the central nervous system, the skull, the skeleton, digestion, respiration and excretion, all carry on as in life.

There would therefore need to be toilets, sewage systems and food production. Further, since Christians, Muslims and others, who believe in life after death, would frown upon the living-dead traipsing around heaven naked, there would need to be clothes production. All of this inevitably calls for social production and a division of labour. Are we to accept that dead capitalists carry on as capitalists, and wage-slaves - used to living on their knees - carry on doing so?

The unthinking ignorance that makes life-after-death an acceptable concept never asks obvious questions like: what happens to the ageing process in their fantasy world?

Does the 96-year-old stay forever at that age? What about young children, perhaps slaughtered in a capitalist war? Do they remain for eternity at the age they were, or is there some ideal age which, once reached, stays the same forever? Normal biology holds until it conflicts with fantasy, then it is suspended.

What is happening in the minds of insecure people in a violent world is that they project their lack of fulfilment and fear of mortality into a fantasy world which can be anything they pretend or imagine it to be.

There is a refusal to face the real world of capitalism and to realise that most of the major problems confronting man today arise from the way the world is run for the profit of the few through the degradation of the many. When mankind owns in common the world's resources and the means of production, the world will be democratically run by a conscious majority; there will then be no need for idiotic fantasies.

About the Socialist Party of Great Britain

... We, as Socialists, venture to assert that the party which is ultimately to secure the support of the rank and file of the working-class must be a Socialist party ...

... The Socialist ... has to show the workers that ... they can best help to emancipate themselves from the thralldom of wage-slavery by recognising that in their class struggle with their exploiters they can be most certain of success in the political sphere of action. Such political action will, however, be quite futile unless carried on by a class-conscious party with definite aims ... The first duty of the Socialist Party is the teaching of its principles and the organisation of a political party on a Socialist basis ...

Men and women of the working-class, it is to you that we appeal! ... We ask you ... to study the principles upon which our party is based, to find out for yourselves what Socialism is and how Socialism and Socialism alone can abolish class society and establish in its stead a society based upon social equality ...

From **The Socialist Standard**, No. 1 Vol. I

London, September 1904

IMAGINE

In February 2003 Dr Williams was enthroned as the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, the spiritual voice of the Capitalist State. To celebrate the enthronement **The Independent** (27 February 2003) published Dr Williams' words of wisdom on matters spiritual and temporal.

And it included this gem on Socialism:

"One of the things that socialism can be particularly bad at is imagination - not just political imagination of different forms of society, but also the readiness to be patient with the quirks and the byways of the human heart".

On the contrary. One of the strengths of Socialism is its creativity and imagination. From a comprehensive critique of capitalism. Socialists can imagine a society in which there will be no wages, no buying and selling, no commodity production and exchange for profit, no employers, no classes, no private ownership of the means of production, and no nation states. Men and women will work co-operatively together to design, build and maintain a world fit for human beings, rather than the present system of wage enslavement with its poverty, war and social alienation.

And from a scientific assessment of social evolution Socialists can imagine social relationships without superstition, without religion and without archbishops. We can imagine a world that does not force people on their knees to worship empty abstractions of the mind created by human beings to enslave other human beings. What exercise of the imagination is it to see people accept ways of living dictated by the violent barbarism of the Koran, the Old Testament and the pious sentiments of the New Testament? What imagination is there in Heaven and Hell? What imagination is there in sin? And what imagination is there in the dogmas and doctrines of theological tracts, arcane ritual and the stench of incense?

But where the Socialist imagination is at its best is when we imagine a social system in which production takes place directly and simply to meet human needs. Imagine a world where raw resources are freely moved across a world without political barriers just to satisfy need. Imagine free and voluntary labour producing goods and services just because they are needed by society. Imagine a world in which the affairs of society are carried on democratically to ensure people can lead worthwhile lives.

Socialist imagination can even be put into song:-

*Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today ...*

*Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace ...*

*Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world*

*You say that I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one.*

John Lennon, **Imagine**, 1971.

As for patience. Well, we require a Socialist majority before Socialism is possible. This does require patience. Not the passive quiescent patience of the Cathedral cloister but the active political patience of the revolutionary demonstrating to the working class that capitalism cannot work in their interests and that there is an urgent necessity to take conscious and political action to establish Socialism.

We know from bitter experience that impatience leads to factionalism, splits, flirtation with anarchism, and a drift into social reforms. Patience, after all, is a virtue not lost on Socialists, since our case against capitalism is directed at the brain rather than at the heart.

Marx, Engels, the Working Class and Dictatorship

At the founding of the International we expressly formulated the battle cry: the emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself. Hence we cannot co-operate with men who say openly that the workers are too uneducated to emancipate themselves, and must first be emancipated from above by philanthropic members of the upper and lower middle classes.

Marx, 1879, Marx/Engels Correspondence

From Blanqui's assumption, that any revolution may be made by the outbreak of a small revolutionary minority, follows of itself the necessity of a dictatorship after the success of the venture. This is, of course, a dictatorship, not of the entire revolutionary class, the proletariat, but of the small minority that has made the revolution, and who are themselves previously organised under the dictatorship of one or several individuals.

Engels, 1874, Marx/Engels Correspondence

OF RICH AND POOR - SOME STATISTICS

"Suppose we could shrink the world's population to a village of precisely 100 people while all the existing human ratios remain the same ..." Now that is not a bad idea for those of us who find statistics can be tricky to understand. This was the beginning of an interesting item found on the wonderful Web, and apparently the statistics are based on UN sources.

From this we find that just six of these 100 people "would possess 59% of the world's wealth and all six would be from the United States". Hardly very surprising, given the way the United States dominates the world like some giant colossus.

What does this mean for the majority of us, those who are among the 94% of people whose share of the world's wealth is pathetically small? How does living under the capitalist system affect us?

The stats tell us that:-

*80% live in substandard housing.
70% are unable to read.
50% suffer from malnutrition.*

So nearly three-quarters of us are unable to read at all while only 1% has a university education. Half the world's people suffer from malnutrition, and four out of five are in housing so indescribably awful that it is best referred to by a euphemism as "substandard".

Sad to relate, this interesting set of statistics makes no reference to the one vital statistic we would like to see featured prominently, ie the growing percentage

of the working class who see the necessity of Socialism. It also tactfully omits to mention the consequences in terms of the huge differences in life expectancy depending on whether you happen to have been born rich and privileged, or in a disadvantaged, poor country. Life expectancy ranges from over 80 years in Japan and Sweden, and over 75 years in 45 other states, but at the other end of the spectrum there are over 50 countries with average life expectancy below 60 years, the lowest being Botswana with 36.1 years being the average there (*Pocket World in Figures 2003*, The Economist).

Back in the 19th century, the poet Shelley commented that "*the rich have become richer, and the poor have become poorer*". For most of the working class in the industrialised capitalist countries like the US this has not been the case during the later half of the 20th century although it is held as an act of faith by the capitalist Left that the "*rich get richer and the poor get poorer*". The implication is that the bottom 20% constitutes the working class when from a Marxian perspective it clearly doesn't. The working class includes those on high salaries as well as low.

Marx made the point that it did not matter whether the chains which bind workers to capital are made of iron or gold. What matters is that the working class as a whole are exploited whether their pay is high or low. The case for Socialism is directed at all workers despite differences in wages and salaries. The point socialists make is that it is not wages and salaries *per se* which are the problem in relation to the income received by the working class but instead the wages system. Capitalism cannot be made to work in the interests of the working class no matter how well workers are paid.

Although the working class as a whole have seen their incomes increase during the last century, largely as a result of trade union organisation, this has not been the case for a group of workers identified by academics as "*the bottom 20%*". A report, in the US, based on Census Bureau data, has been published by two research groups, the Centre on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute, and an account of this appeared in the *New York Times* (April 24, 2002).

Looking at household incomes at the peak of the last three economic cycles (the late 1970s, late 1980s and the late 1990s), income inequality had been increasing:

Gains in the top 20 percent of families ... outstripped those in the bottom 20 percent in 44 states ... In 5 states - Arizona, California, New York, Ohio and Wyoming - income among the bottom 20 per cent of households actually fell in inflation-adjusted terms while it rose rapidly in the top 20 percent.

For instance, in New York over the 20 years studied, the bottom 20 percent of families saw their average income fall by 5.9 percent, to \$12,639, while in the same period those in the top 20 percent found their incomes rose by 54.1 percent, to \$161,858.

That meant that by the late 1990s the average income of the top fifth of households in New York was nearly 13 times that of the lowest fifth, up from 8 times as much as 20 years earlier. *"The year 2000 marked the final year of the longest recovery on record"*, said Jared Bernstein, an economist at the Economic Policy Institute. *"Toward the end of the great 90s boom, we had very low unemployment and finally saw some long-awaited real gains for families at bottom of income scale. But it failed to reverse the growth of income inequality".*

It is a mistake to assume that facts speak for themselves. This is especially the case where economic statistics are concerned. The economists responsible for this report offered several reasons why income inequality for some workers had increased in the last few decades.

Partly it was due to policy - particularly the cuts in personal taxation affecting the rich and also cuts in Social Security rates affecting the unemployed, the disabled and single parents. There had been major economic changes, such as the Wall Street boom in New York and the IT-dotcom boom in California. In

several states there had been a loss of manufacturing jobs and these had been replaced by relatively low-paid service-sector jobs.

Hence the growth of income inequality. But it is worth asking about another set of statistics, those which measure wealth ownership, particularly the ownership of capital: wealth used to create more wealth, through the exploitation of wage and salary workers, and the production of surplus value.

Unfortunately these '*liberal*' think tank economists, likewise the journalists of the respectable *New York Times*, have no interest in offering us these statistics. However we are confident that it is more than likely that in the USA, just as in Britain, only a tiny minority of the population derives its income from capital rather than earnings.

It follows that, even if there had been no Wall Street boom, no dotcom bubble, and no structural shift from manufacturing to service sector jobs, the rich would have continued to grow even richer. It is the nature of the capitalist system which ensures that every year, every week, every hour that we work for them, we do so to help them get richer.

This it is that distinguishes the Socialist from the non-Socialist - our awareness of how the wages system ensures the perpetuation of the gulf between the capitalist class and the working class. As Shelley wrote:

*The seeds ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps.*

"OUR HERITAGE"

When Joseph Stalin ruled the Soviet Union his picture was everywhere on public display. Posters on lamp-posts and hoardings and photographs in newspapers were common. The resourcefulness of journalists was most evident in their ability to tell stories relating his many "virtues", and "leadership qualities" indispensable to the welfare of Soviet workers.

Behind this leader-promotion there was a power complex of a privileged minority of which Stalin was the head. The exploited masses had constantly to be reminded how fortunate they were to have such a "dynamic" and "benevolent" master.

The fact of their subject position - in a highly militarised society that called upon millions of them to die in war and which, towards the end of his reign, was stockpiling nuclear weapons - did not diminish their master in the minds of the likely victims.

So it is in 21st century Britain. Because the parasite son of a parasite ruling dynasty reaches the age of twenty-one, every Post Office is adorned with his photograph, a special postage stamp is issued with his picture to mark his achievement, and the press and television carry stories of the "great" event.

Because of the conditioning process to which workers are subject, most will see no similarity between the British monarchy and the position occupied by Stalin in Soviet Russia. Yet the privilege and power are there for all to see. The exploited masses are reminded of their subject status by a constant series of circus "events"; when one of the parasites attends a function of some kind, or when security is breached at Windsor Castle during a farcical display, which led to a shake-up in the police force!

The militarism of British capitalism and its frequent involvement in wars is also plain. The nationalism which urges workers to identify their interests with those of the capitalists is also the same and, like Russia under Stalin (and since), Britain is a nuclear power.

It should not be forgotten that, after Stalin's pact with Hitler collapsed when Germany invaded Russia in June 1941, police-state Russia, with its slave-labour camps and one-party dictatorship, became Britain's ally until the war ended in 1945. We are also reminded, first by Stalin's pact with Hitler and then by his alliance with Britain and America, how much capitalism everywhere, despite its variations, has in common.

Such situations will continue for as long as workers in Russia, Britain and the rest of the world are prepared to tolerate capitalism and interest themselves in the useless exploits of those who live on their backs.

Commenting on the social relations of production, Marx says on page 66 of **Capital, Volume 1**:

For instance, one man is king only because other men stand in relation of subjects to him. They, on the contrary, imagine that they are subjects because he is king.

Keeping us informed about some of the futile business of our rulers, the **Sunday Express** (13 July 2003) reported that resulting from a potentially ruinous legal action brought by an American company against their mother's memorial fund and its trustees, Princes William and Harry "... have expressed their fury over the legal fiasco and mismanagement ...". Such favourite causes as that of the homeless would continue to be supported.

The same newspaper published some figures about the personal fortunes of the two princes. In William's case "his total funds now stand at about £21 million". While Harry, whose fortune is tied up in trusts, is said to have: "... fallen to £24 million". Two healthy young men, who have never done any sustained work or had a job, but are in no fear of being homeless themselves.

One worker who spends his working life behind a Post Office counter expressed a commonly held opinion: "What's wrong with William? He's part of our heritage. It's what the tourists come to see".

This begs the question as to why tourists go to France, Germany or China. But "our heritage" raises other issues. Whose heritage? That of ordinary workers or that of wealthy capitalists? They are quite different. The phrase is meant for the popular consumption of the nationally minded to encourage the illusion that "heritage" makes us all the same.

The present occupants of Buck House owe their position, in heritage terms, to centuries of bloody feudal wars of plunder and land-grabbing. The heritage of the monarchy consists of vast wealth and privilege derived from the exploitation of feudal serfs of the past and the continuing exploitation of wage-labour in the present.

The capitalist class and their political hirelings have kept the monarchy on as their figure-head mascot. An unelected Head-of-State in a so-called democracy; an anachronism in a time-warp. Their lives could hardly be more remote from those of the working class, who produce all the wealth of society while struggling from one pay-day to the next.

An important part of working class heritage is to suffer the effects of a mis-education system which instils religious nonsense and the idea of "good" kings and "bad" kings without explaining exploitation!

The heritage of workers consists of being hired and fired as producers of profit for the real owners of the country, the capitalist class including the Royal Family. It is a heritage which includes the Child Poverty Action Group, Help the Aged and many other poverty-driven charities. It includes 84,000 homeless and 750,000 who, according to a **Consumers Council Report** (9 July 2003), cannot afford £6.30 per item for health prescriptions and are not covered by exemption.

Also, it includes periodic calls for young workers to kill or be killed in capitalism's frequent wars. It was also reported on 9 July, 2003 that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh attended a service to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Korean war. With the number of wars since then, and future ones being hinted at, not least against North Korea, this aspect of "our heritage" should keep Prince William and his younger brother occupied pending their being found something more useful to do.

Opposition to other Political Parties

"the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party."

The chief reason why this clause was included in our Declaration of Principles is that our objective is not the same as those of other parties claiming to be socialist whose aims are completely incompatible with ours. Socialism is not compatible with trying to administer capitalism or improve it with reforms.

For the Socialist Party to work with non socialist parties would create confusion and make it harder for the workers to understand the socialist case. What is needed is for each worker to make the crucial choice between capitalism and Socialism, to reject the one and support the other. For this the utmost clarity is required, not the confusion that would inevitably follow from associating with those who profess to support Socialism but who in their deeds are its enemies.

Socialist Studies No. 1

THE FUTURE - A DREAM OR A NIGHTMARE ?

All too often one finds people jibbing (complaining) at the notion of a society based on common ownership. They object, naively, "but what about human nature? How would it work? Who would do the work? Who would make the decisions and organise things?"

They are clearly ignorant of the society they live in. They are ignorant of capitalism. This is a social and economic system where workers actually work a lot more than they need to so as to support a class of useless drones. And a large part of our productive work is done to support huge sectors of the economy which are not of much use and in large part are harmful to humanity. Think of all the labour wasted on advertising slogans and marketing gimmicks. On producing goods with a short lifespan and built-in obsolescence. On accountancy and consultancy and the so-called '*financial services*'. On that mega-big gambling casino called the Stock Exchange.

Or think too about the assumption in the questions we get about who would take decisions and organise things. Behind this question is the assumption that we, the 95% of the population who are working class – i.e. who must sell our labour-power, our capacity to work, for wages or salaries or work long hours as so-called '*small businessmen*', exploiting ourselves; we, who run the whole show now; we, who are in fact the "*movers and shakers*", scientists and researchers, the engineers and chemists, the managers and progress-chasers; all of us who generally keep the whole show on the road – that while we are capable of doing all this as mere hirelings (wage-slaves), to ensure the profits of the drone-class, it seems that we would be quite incapable of doing what was necessary to ensure that a Socialist community would operate smoothly.

Think about the incentives we have under the present system to do a good job of work. "Er – what incentive?" you ask. Just so: the capitalist system is one where everything is geared to the profit-incentive. And as it happens we do not get any column marked '*profit*' in our payslips. Profits – which come from our unpaid labour – are reserved for those that employ us, usually using other members of the working class to do the actual hiring and firing on their behalf, just as they hire some of us to manage their businesses for them and fight their wars for them.

A class of drones? No, that's not fair to drones: they at least are necessary to a swarm of bees. The capitalist class is superfluous, its profit system is one of waste and want, of competition, violence and war, which endangers the planet on which we depend. "Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught will we realise that we cannot eat money" – protested an anonymous 19th century Cree Indian. Time for a change.

OBITUARY
CYRIL MAY
01.12.1920 - 08.10.2003

It is with great sadness that we record the death of our comrade and General Secretary, Cyril May. He suffered a stroke at home on Friday 12th September. At the hospital he amazed medics with the degree of his recovery from what they considered was a fatal attack. However, further strokes were to follow and he died some 26 days later.

Cyril was one of five children and he is survived by three: a younger sister, a brother (87) and an older sister (93), all of whom attended his funeral. Their father was chef at Lord's cricket ground. Cyril's lifelong interest in cricket stems from his early opportunities to be a Lord's visitor, thanks to his dad, but the interest was more as a spectator than as a player.

The family background and upbringing included a strong Baptist and Methodist influence. Sunday School was part of their lives. Cyril paid attention just as he did at day school.

Whilst at school he developed a lifelong interest in classical music and he became leading violinist in the school orchestra. (In July 2003 Cyril and his son Ben appeared on BBC Breakfast TV. Ben played a Beethoven piece on the piano and then they both listened to a contemporary 'rock' group - Radio-head. Cyril's contribution ended with the words: '*I prefer Beethoven, thank-you*).

At age 15 Cyril's father died, making it necessary that he should leave school. When he left school he had already benefited from tuition in book-keeping and touch-typing and 'office skills' - in all of which he remained proficient until his last day at home.

Thanks to his qualifications, he quickly found a junior post with Winkworth, a property management company. With the advent of war in 1939, and with a number of Winkworth staff off to fight '*for their country*', a capable man like Cyril moved up to visiting various country houses etc to make inventories of the buildings which were to be taken over by the military for the war's duration.

Like many a young man of his generation, Cyril was confronted with the clash between his religious, Methodist, background and the reality of the world in which he found himself. At this period he looked around the platforms in Hyde Park listening to the various views, and began to pay attention to the views of The Socialist Party of Great Britain. There he caught the possibility of a world without war. There he heard proposed a world-wide democratic system of society which, with a class-conscious majority, could bring about a world where things would be produced solely for use; a world in which the cause of war had been eliminated.

But the challenge of this idea brought with it the reading of books such as *The Evolution of the Idea of God* and also introduced him to the Materialist Conception of History.

The impact of this to the 19/20 year old man was his '*on the road to Damascus*' experience. He joined Paddington branch in 1940. Refusing to be conscripted, he was sent to Wormwood Scrubs Prison.

Meanwhile, he set about a new course of studies and quickly learnt to speak on the platform, becoming one of Hyde Park's talented orators of the 1940's and 50's. Cyril and other Socialists would speak at such venues as Slab Square in Nottingham, Tower Hill and Lincoln's Inn, and many other venues in the country.

In its heyday and with Cyril as one of its main speakers, the Party would command audiences of 1000-2000 in Hyde Park. When pressed on the question of what he did for a living, Cyril would reply that he was the doorkeeper at Buckingham Palace.

In addition to his considerable speaking abilities, Cyril May possessed an eye for detail and a great deal of organisational skill. One particular activity worth mentioning is the considerable work undertaken by Cyril organising literature sales during the period of the big CND marches.

He continued a commitment to the cause of Socialism for the rest of his life. His main role over many years was that of Central Organiser – organising meetings, debates, conferences, dances. He made a tremendous contribution to the Party's propaganda work, including involvement in the Party's Trafalgar Square rallies and organising Speakers' Classes. He also continued to speak on the indoor and outdoor platform at many venues across the UK and abroad, and was interviewed on a number of occasions by various Boston radio stations.

A new wave of members in the 1970's and 80's, claiming to be 'modernisers', schemed to change the Party's case by watering it down, downplaying the Party's Principles in favour of a mere 'Utopian', reformist and opportunist position. A symbol of their dominance as a faction in the Party was their success in pushing through a Conference resolution which had the effect of banning the use of the SPGB's full name in favour of the confusing and incorrect name '*The Socialist Party*'. This brought about a reaction amongst stalwarts, of whom Cyril was one, arguing that this went counter to Clause 8 of the SPGB's Principles.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain was duly reconstituted on 11th June, 1991. Comrade May accepted appointment as our General Secretary and joined in the work of rebuilding the Party as though he were a young man.

He continued a very active and full role in the work of the Party. The day after he moved house in July 2003, he drove from London to Dorset and back in order to be present at the SPGB literature stands at the annual event held to mark the anniversary of the Tolpuddle martyrs. With other comrades, he sold literature in France at the Party's stand at the *Lutte Ouvrière* festival in the summer of 2003. He was busy with Party activity of various kinds until he was taken into hospital in mid-September, just a few days after selling literature at the Trade Union Congress Conference in Brighton.

To his brother and sisters, and particularly to his wife Alison and their son Ben, we extend our condolences. Cyril will be much missed as a comrade liked and respected by all who knew him, and worked for Socialism with him.

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18th January 2004

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Speaker: H. Baldwin.

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Sunday 13 June 2004

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Lecture 1. Politics and Principle - Speaker: H. Baldwin.

Lecture 2. Class Consciousness and Political Action - Speaker: C. Skelton.

MARCHMONT COMMUNITY CENTRE

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (e.g. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the seizure of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and photographic.

That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation can be hostile to every other party.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and from poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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